



March 8, 2000

The Honorable John M. Phillips
Presiding Judge of the Coordinated Trial Courts Monterey County
Post Office Box 414
Salinas, California 93902

Re: Response to the 1999 Monterey County Grand Jury Final Report

Dear Judge Phillips:

This letter is in response to the 1999 Monterey County Grand Jury Final Report concerning Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority and the landfill facilities. There are a few facts cited in the report that are in need of correction and these clarifications are included in the responses to the findings or recommendations.

As you may be aware, the SVSWA was formed in January 1997 as a Joint Powers Authority among the cities of Salinas, Gonzales, Soledad, Greenfield, King City as well as Monterey County. This JPA was formed to maximize the efficiency in managing the regional landfills in the Salinas Valley area and to ensure long term landfill capacity for the region in a cost effective and environmentally sensitive manner. In December 1999, the SVSWA expanded its scope to provide assistance to all requesting member agencies in meeting their AB939 recycling goals and has continued to make positive changes in the infrastructure and operations of its landfills and diversion activities.

Outlined below are the responses to the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury.

• **Findings**

Finding 1. **The Member Cities will not meet the recycling goals established by AB 939 by the end of the year 2000 unless immediate steps are taken.**

The City of Soledad concurs with this finding in general. However as you can see from the table below, the City of Soledad is working hard to assure that our AB 939 goals are met. I believe that we are doing very well in this effort. The SVSWA has calculated to diversion rates as follows:

Finding 1. The Member cities will not meet the recycling goals established by A939 by the end of the year 2000 unless immediate steps are taken ...
cont'd

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>2000 "Goal"</u>	<u>1998 "Actual"</u>
Greenfield	32.9%	11%
Gonzales	32.1%	-81%
King City	31.4%	-4%
Salinas	50%	15%
<u>Soledad</u>	<u>50%</u>	<u>49%</u>
Unincorporated County	50%	25%

Finding 2. SVSWA is not responsible for waste reduction but, if requested, will assist the Member Cities in recycling.

The City of Soledad agrees with this finding and in fact has contacted the SVSWA to assist us in our efforts.

Finding 3. Citizens, businesses and growers within the SVSWA need incentives to reduce solid waste.

The City of Soledad agrees with this finding. There are many incentives that could be explored including educational efforts, support of new infrastructure and development of countywide outlets for commercial/industrial/retail recycling materials. Also, local ordinances and county ordinances could be enacted that mandate the recycling which we believe is necessary to foster waste reduction among residents, businesses, and growers.

Finding 4. Agricultural industry waste has increased. Wax-covered cardboard, plastic and plastic packaging is difficult to recycle and typically remains in landfills.

The City of Soledad agrees with this finding. Agricultural waste continues to be a problem on streets, public right of ways, and the state highways.

Finding 5. As of October 1, 1999 there is no incentive for growers to separate usable waste from green waste.

See next page for response.

Finding 5. As of October 1, 1999 there is no incentive for growers to separate usable waste from green waste ... cont'd

While this may be true, the City of Soledad would like to note that there are currently no reduced rates at the SVSWA landfills for growers to separate the waste materials. A reduced rate may encourage growers to separate materials before hauling to the landfill. However, the business incentives (cost savings) of diverting separated materials from the waste stream may prove costly and would need further study.

Finding 6. In 1998, the amount of disposable waste Generated by residents of tire member cities of the SVSWA averaged 0. 8 tons per person.

The City of Soledad disagrees partially with this finding. We are uncertain how the Grand Jury arrived at this figure and would have to verify through the SVSWA.

- **Recommendations**

Recommendation 1. Member Cities arrange with their respective waste collectors for collection of-green waste

Waste Management, Inc. currently provides weekly collection of residential green waste in King City and biweekly collection in Salinas. The cities of Soledad, Gonzales, Greenfield and King City have weekly drop-off for green waste. The SVSWA has been empowered by the member cities to review our current service agreements and assess the efficiency of this effort and to determine the feasibility of expanding certain services including the collection of green waste at the curb.

Recommendation 2. Member cities initiate plans with SVSWA to increase the type and amount of materials recycled.

The City of Soledad has done a great job at recycling. Our residents are very diligent in their efforts and neatly place their filled recycling containers at the curb for pick up each week. The City of Soledad has requested that the VSWA develop a new program which includes the following services:

- **Reporting Efforts**

Development of new base years and more accurate diversion figures, submittal of AB 939 Annual Reports, Modification of the Source Reduction and Recycling Element (SRRE), and Semi-annual reports.

- **Commercial and Industrial Diversion**

See next page for response.

- Commercial and Industrial Diversion ... cont'd

Our efforts through SVSWA will be to conduct on-site waste assessments at selected businesses and development of programs to increase diversion for businesses, Also included is the development of markets for the difficult materials to resale.

- Public Education

The SVSWA will be assisting the City of Soledad with developing/expanding in-house recycling programs. Included is the development of a broad-based public education program and programs geared at schools and educational activities.

- Household Hazardous Waste Program

Our current effort includes operation of household hazardous waste sites, used oil collection points and conducting rural one-day collection events.

- Increased Diversion at the landfills

Some of the items that the City of Soledad will be working with the SVSWA includes the development of landfill rate incentives to encourage delivery of targeted materials in a source separated manner and the determining the feasibility of accepting source-separated household recyclable for diversion. Also included is the development of materials recovery programs at selected landfills in order to recover construction and demolition waste, green waste cardboard and other materials from uncompacted waste loads

- Review and Enforce Franchise Agreements

The City of Soledad through the SVSWA will make every effort to evaluate existing franchise agreements to determine what areas can be improved upon and will conduct performance audits of the hauling franchisee and their current level of service.

Recommendation 3. SVSWA contract with a private sector company to analyze randomly the contents of waste collection trucks at the landfills to determine the amount of recyclable goods.

This recommendation has been implemented. A waste composition study targeting uncompacted waste delivered at SVSWA facilities was completed in October 1999. I believe that the SVSWA has included a copy of this report with their response.

Recommendation 4. SVSWA contract with a private sector company to produce saleable compost.

This recommendation is in process of implementation. The green waste produced by Waste Management in Salinas and hauled to Crazy Horse landfill serves the beneficial use of alternative daily cover. The material at Johnson Canyon Road Landfill and Jolon Road Landfill is intended

Recommendation 4. SVSWA contract with a private sector company to produce saleable Compost ... cont'd

to be processed and marketed to a vendor who specializes in composting or used on -site for erosion control.

Recommendation 5. SVSWA contract with a private sector company to utilize discarded concrete asphalt and base rock.

This issue is currently being addressed through the SVSWA. The SVSWA is discussing and may have reached a resolution on a contract with a local contractor to process accumulated construction and demolition material at Crazy Horse landfill. A similar program is being planned for Johnson Canyon Road Landfill.

Recommendation 6. SVSWA create incentives for the public businesses, and growers to reduce landfill waste by increasing or decreasing fees, depending upon the material being discarded.

The City of Soledad through the SVSWA has initiated a program to analyze the cost of processing and marketing recyclable material (such as wood waste, green waste, appliances and metals) and expects to adjust tipping fees in late spring or early summer of 2000.

Recommendation 7. Member Cities implement and initiate Procedures for sale of recyclable items similar to the Environmental Park at the Marina Landfill, including the distribution, at no charge, of discarded paint and household cleaning products.

The City of Soledad through the SVSWA has initiated a program for no-cost redistribution of paint and household cleaning products at its household hazardous materials facility. The SVSWA preferred approach is the diversion of recyclable materials before they reach the solid waste facilities rather than at a resale activity. As a result, the focus is at the source of waste, generation, e.g., businesses, schools and residences.

In conclusion and on behalf of the entire City Council and the City of Soledad, I would like to express our appreciation for the efforts undertaken by the Grand Jury on these very timely issues in our county. Should you have any questions regarding our response please do not hesitate to call our City Manager Belinda Espinosa or myself at 678-3963.

Sincerely,



Gary Gerbrandt
Mayor

C City Council
City Attorney